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ALEXANDRIA MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO SEXUAL EXPLOITATION PRODUCTION CHARGE

Defendant admits to sexual molestation of minor girls

Alexandria, Louisiana. . . United States Attorney Donald W. Washington announced that **RICHARD ALLEN FRANKLIN**, age 30, of Tullos, Louisiana, pleaded guilty before United States District Judge Dee D. Drell to sexual exploitation of children under the age of 18. A sentencing date has been set for October 4, 2007 at 2:00 p.m.

A federal grand jury returned an indictment in June 2006 charging FRANKLIN with one count of sexual exploitation of children, one count of possession of child pornography, and one count of forfeiture.

FRANKLIN pleaded guilty today to sexual exploitation of children. Testimony at the guilty plea hearing revealed that between September 2003 and March 2006, FRANKLIN sexually molested two minor females. Investigators learned of FRANKLIN's activity after a minor female confided with a family member that FRANKLIN had been sexually molesting her. Officers seized FRANKLIN's computers and CDs and found images of "homemade" child pornography involving minor females.

FRANKLIN faces a minimum sentence of 15 years and a maximum sentence of 30 years in prison, a \$250,000 fine, or both. Sentencing in federal court is determined by the discretion of federal judges and the governing statute. Parole has been abolished in the federal system.

This case was prosecuted under the Project Safe Childhood Initiative in partnership with the Office of the Louisiana Attorney General. In February 2006, Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales created Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative designed to protect children from online exploitation and abuse. Led by the United States Attorneys Offices, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit: www.projectsafechildhood.gov.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Alexandria Resident Agency, Tullos Police Department, LaSalle Parish Sheriff's Office, Rapides Parish Sheriff's Office, LaSalle Parish District Attorney's Office, and Louisiana State Police, and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Earl Campbell.

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